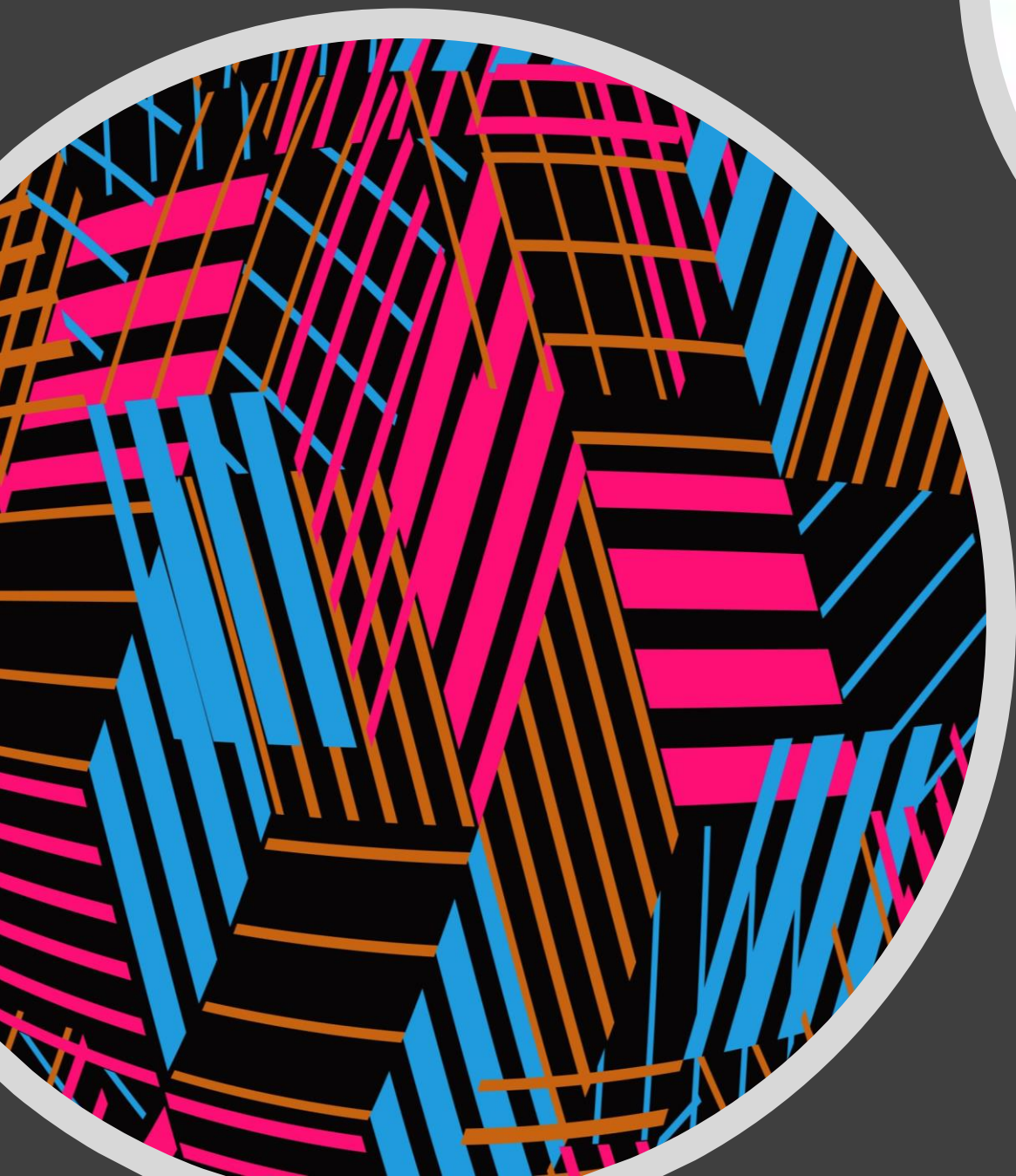


Co-creating your communities of practice

Toolkit

Communities of Practice in HE
on behalf of ODHE Network

August 2021



About this toolkit:

This toolkit aims to guide and inspire you through the process of setting up and sustaining communities of practice at your institution.

It is in the format of a slidedeck to provide you with resources that you can use or adapt for your own purposes.

You will also find links to ongoing peer support via 'Communities of Practice in Higher Education'.

Working definition

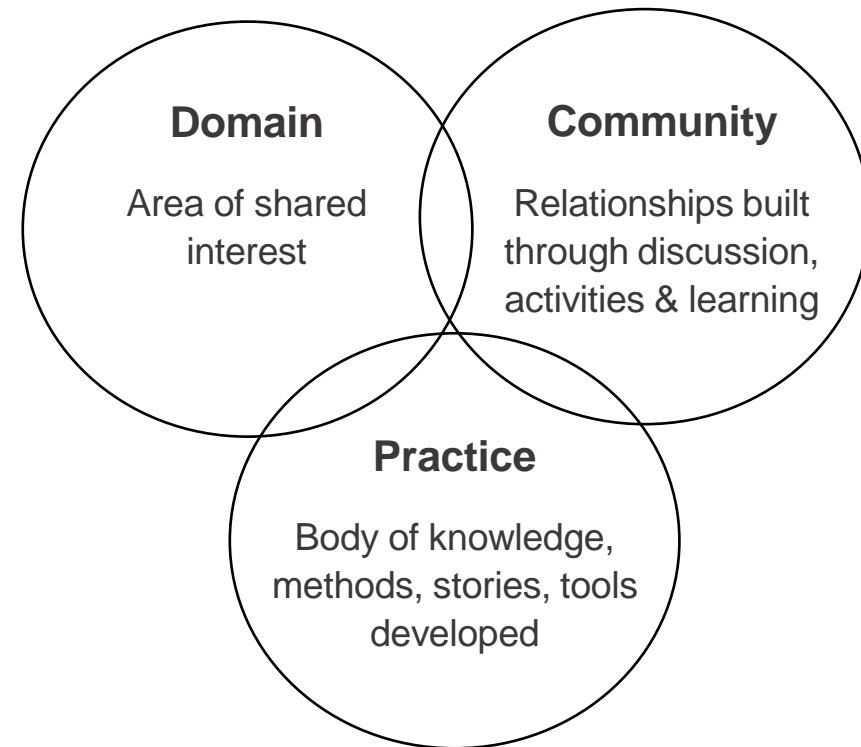


A Community of Practice or CoP is:

“a group of people who perform similar functions and share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly”*

[Watch Etienne Wenger](#) (2.47 mins)

[Read an introduction](#)



*<https://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/>



Benefits of a CoP



Facilitate and enable non-directed personal & professional development

- Access additional knowledge, expertise and network.
- Allow colleagues space in which to test the application of their learning and build confidence (“70-20-10” model).
- Provide opportunities to share information, generate new knowledge, initiate projects that resolve issues and deliver tangible results.

Enhance and align strategic capability across the University

- Help establish cross-institutional synergies and learning.
- Facilitate timely information sharing on policy and use collective knowledge of the community to create better practices.
- Creating ‘meaning’ in work to improve employee engagement.



(not an exhaustive list!)

How a CoP is different



	What's the purpose?	Who belongs?	What holds it together?	How long does it last?
Community of practice	To produce , extend and exchange knowledge and to develop members' capabilities	Members who select themselves	Passion, commitment and identification with the group's expertise	As long as there is interest in maintaining the group, the subject and the learning
Formal work group	To deliver a product or service	Everyone who reports to the group's manager	Job requirements and common goals	Until the next organisation
Project team	To accomplish a specific task	Employees assigned by senior manager	The project's milestones and goals	Until the project has been completed
Informal network	To collect and pass on business information	Friends and business acquaintances	Mutual needs	As long as people have reason to connect



CoPs in practice






Purpose	A group of people that share an interest and come together to fulfil shared goals
Membership	Voluntary: Colleagues self-select to participate and contribute
Organisation	CoPs can emerge or can be intentionally established. They can be self organising or supported by the organisation.
Activities	CoP identify priorities that are within/on the edge of the 'sphere of influence' of the community to progress and complete. These might be project based (usually with support from the Sponsor) or activities (share good practice/new ideas e.g. lunch&learn)
Sponsorship	A CoP Sponsor enables alignment where appropriate; promotes and celebrates success and; values CoP autonomy (they do not direct activity)



How responsibilities can be shared across different roles



	Sponsor	Community Lead/s	Project/Activity Lead/s	Members (active or occasional)	Change & Continuous Improvement/ Equiv. Team
Purpose	Tie the CoP and the benefits to the University's strategic objectives	Lead CoP and enable CoP organisation, communication and information sharing	Lead projects/ activities (objectives) to enhance practice around priorities identified by members	Participate and share knowledge and experiences. Contribute to prioritisation of projects/activities	Enable CoP set up: find the energy, identify the sponsor, facilitate workshops, support launch
Delivering objectives	Work with CoP Lead/s to support Project/Activity Lead/s and any other roles identified.	Support Project Leads and members in delivering objectives	Enable team approach to delivery of objectives through members and other colleagues	Contribute to problem solving and ideas generation	Facilitate CoP connections intra/inter University
Celebrating impact	Advocate acceptance and recognition for the community – promote success!	Manage links with Sponsor & Change/CI Team, on behalf of the CoP	Lead and promote impact and continuous improvement in CoP	Promote and contribute to continuous improvement in the CoP	Provide ongoing support to CoP in running and renewal
Reviewing and renewing	Measure and evaluate the community's contributions to University objectives	Support evaluation of CoP and renewal	Support evaluation of projects/activities and contribute to CoP evaluation and renewal	Identify ways to enhance CoP effectiveness e.g. ways of working, promotion.	Measure and evaluate the community's contributions to University objectives
Resourcing	Allocate budget and resources for the community				Allocate budget and resources for the community

Types of contribution



Support to colleagues

Contribute to skills development

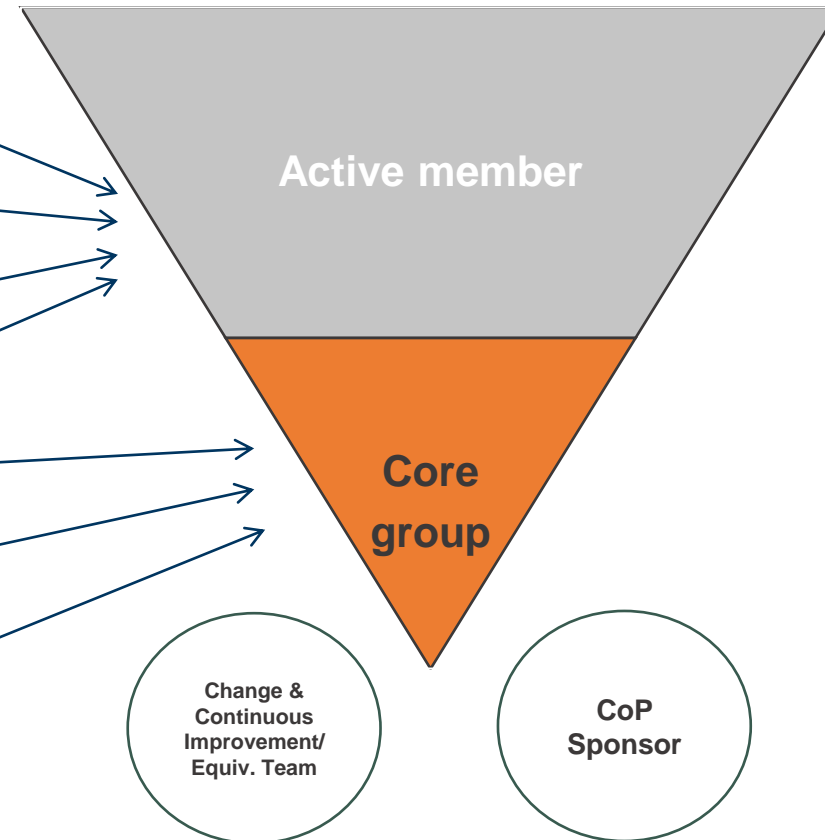
Contribute to projects/initiatives

Co-lead projects/initiatives

Provide logistical/planning support

Co-lead

Type of contribution

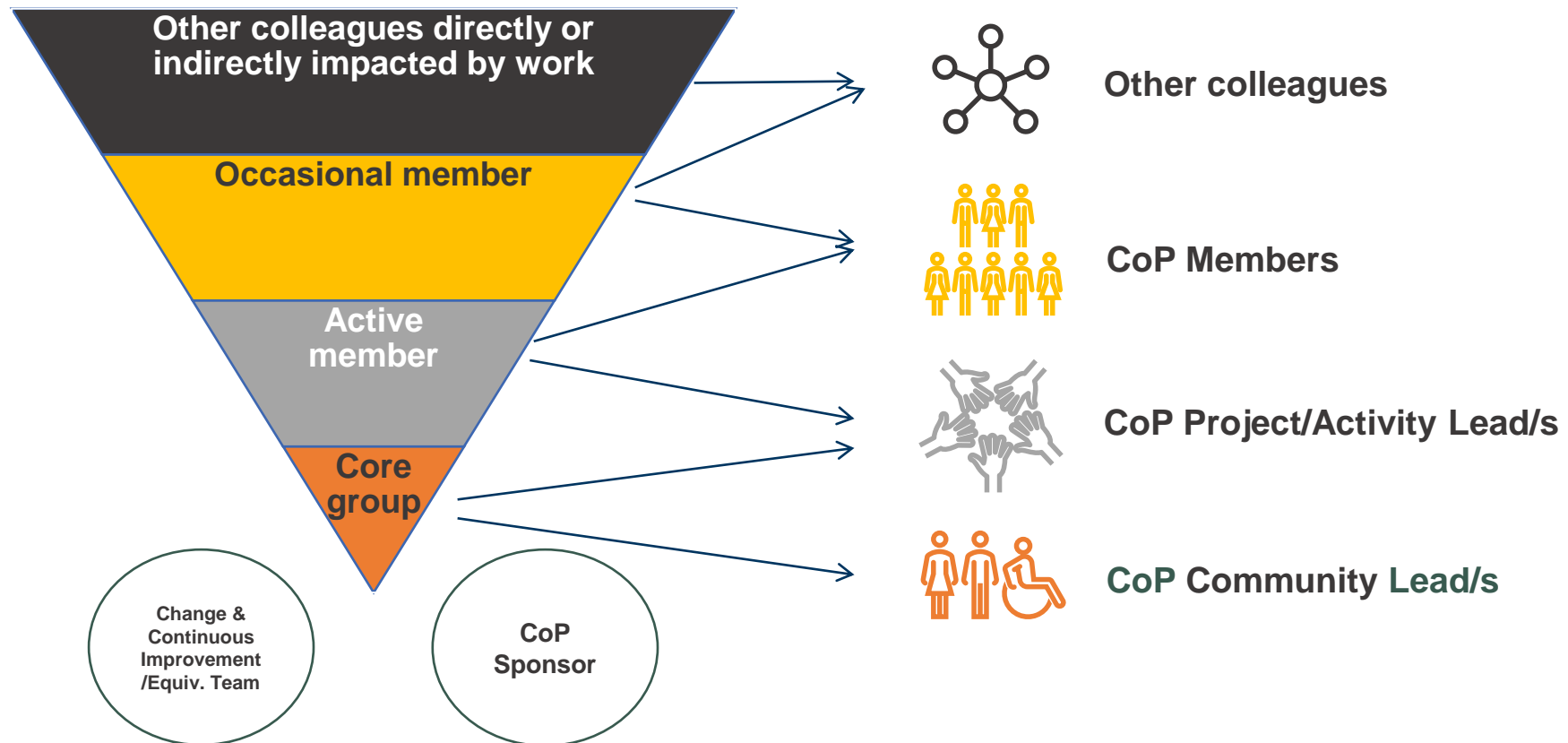


Contributions & roles



Type of contribution

Typical roles



Examples of contribution



Project/ Activity Lead

I was really interested in exploring the concept of leadership as a role that all staff can contribute to, not just those in senior roles. I am working with colleagues from across the University on developing case studies of leadership in practice. This has really helped my confidence in my own leadership ability.

Member (Occasional)

I don't have much time at the moment, but I'm keen to read about the work of the Community and when I can I attend a learning event. I have promoted the Community to other colleagues who have been able to participate. I hope next year, I'll be able to contribute more directly and include it as part of my PDR objectives.

Member (Active)

I've been able to attend learning events and recently become involved in one of the projects. My line manager has been really supportive and I've enjoyed learning from other members of the Community.

Community Lead/s

I've got really good organisational skills and I'm passionate about developing good L&M at the University. I work in partnership with the other Leads – I take more of a role in organisation and communication, whilst they are taking more of a lead on the content of the learning programme and keeping oversight of progress on projects.

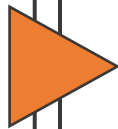


Types of activities



Delivery

- Design & delivery of programme of leaning e.g. lunch & learn
- Design & delivery of projects/activities
- Responding to opportunities
- Evaluation of participation and impact



Decision making

- CoP planning process
- Enabling feedback and reporting back on decisions
- Using evaluation data to enhance Community impact
- Enabling alignment with Sponsor and other CoPs internally (& externally)

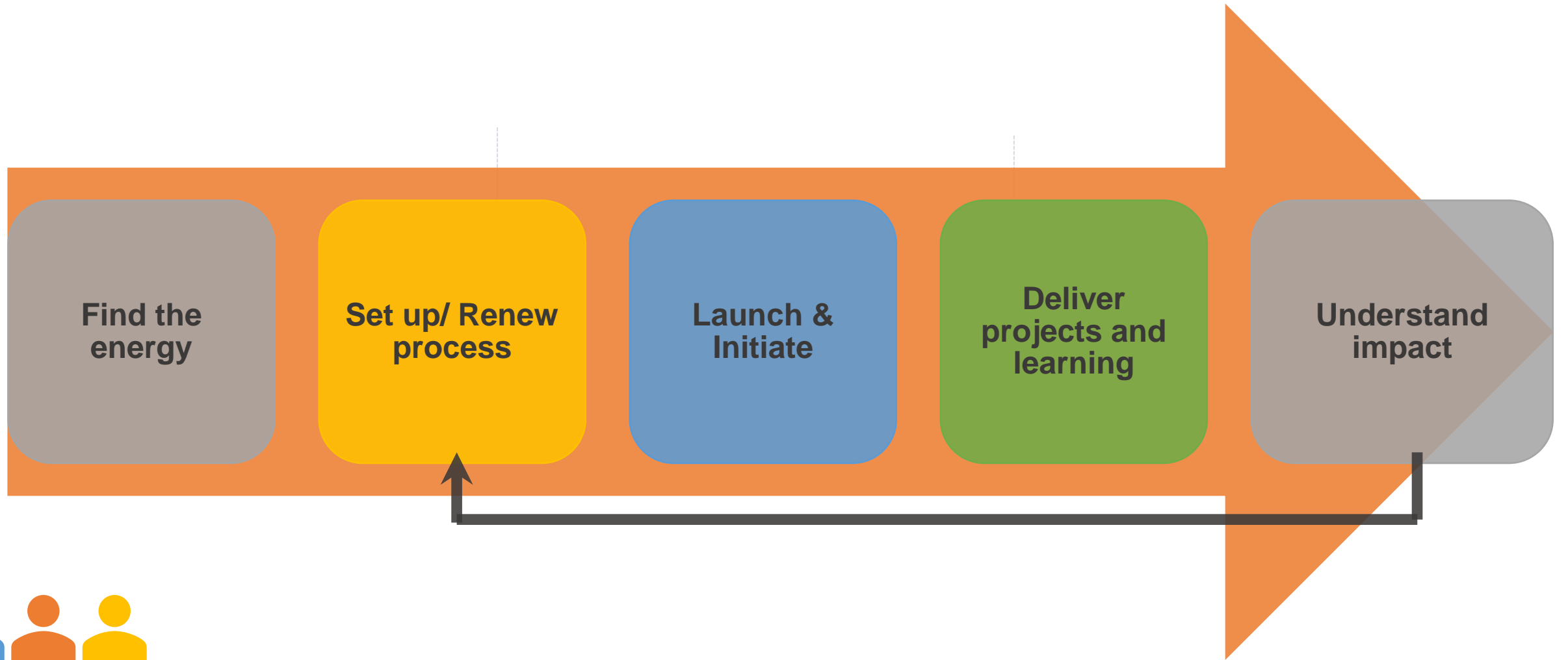


Communications

- Informal and formal comms internally & externally to CoP
- Launch event
- Awareness raising
- Promotion of activities
- Celebrate success



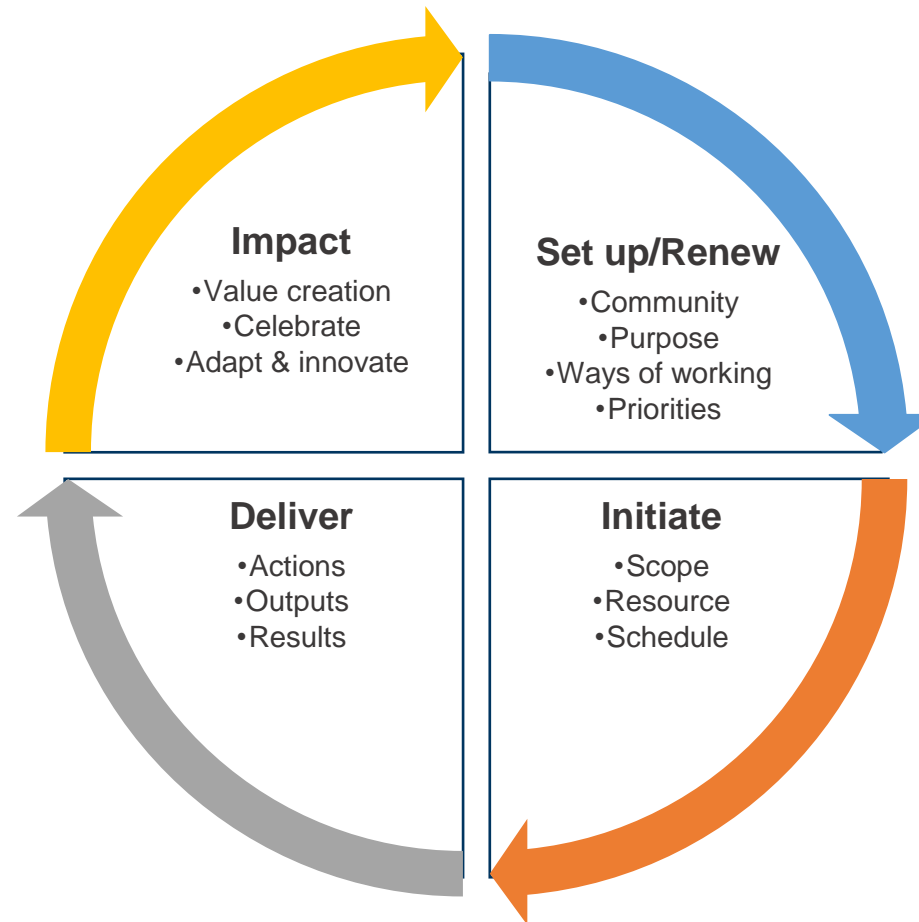
Roadmap



Case study: University of Glasgow



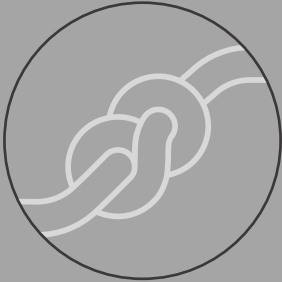
CoP Lifecycle



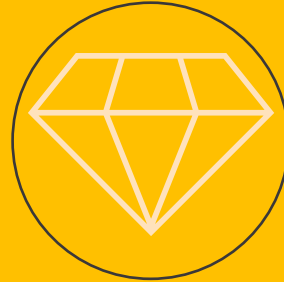
Consider the critical success factors



Executive sponsorship



Alignment with strategic goals



Clarity of purpose and vision



Commitment to the reciprocity of peer learning



Intentional co-creation and nurture of shared values



Diverse membership



Regular 'comms', meetings and calls to action



Find the energy



In the
context of
the
domain/
practice
area

What is your experience of
CoPs/groups which share
similar characteristics?

Are you interested
in participating in
a CoP?

What areas of the
domain are you
most interested
in?

What do you need
and what can you
give?



Be clear about your outcomes



Through co-creation, you will need to establish:



Relationships



A shared
purpose



Ways of
working



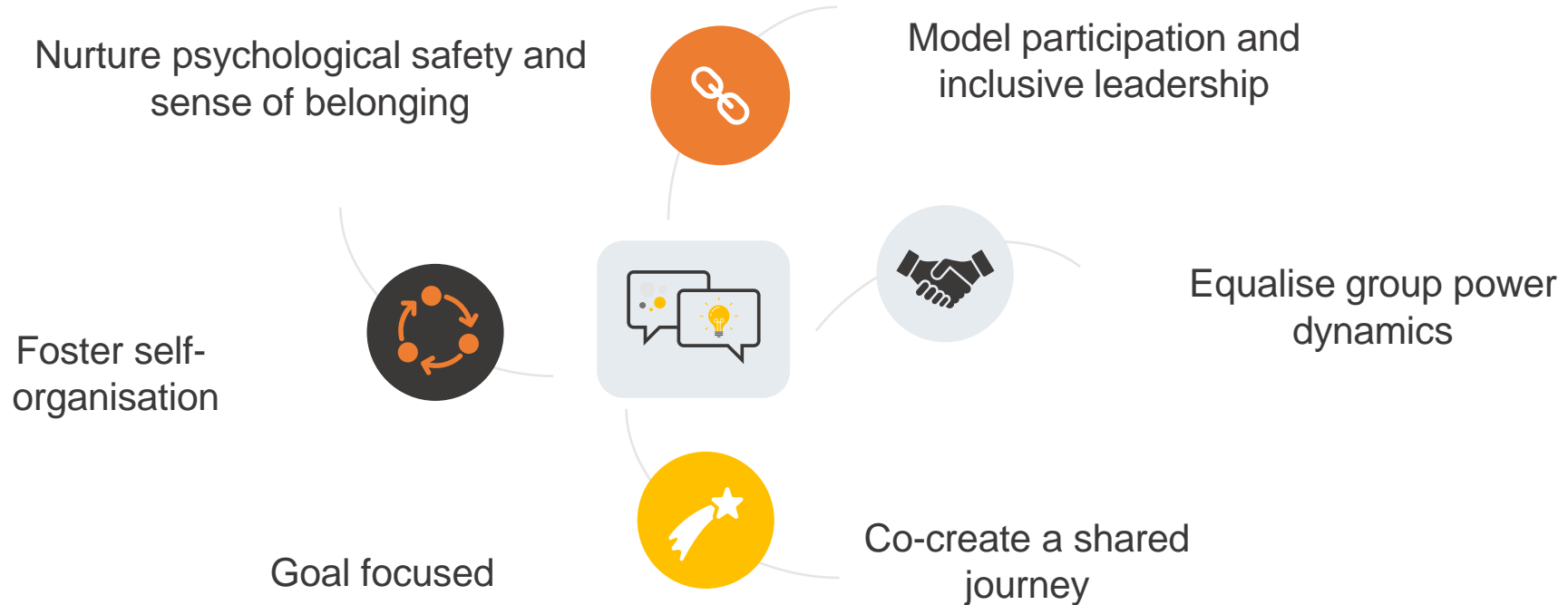
Clear
priorities



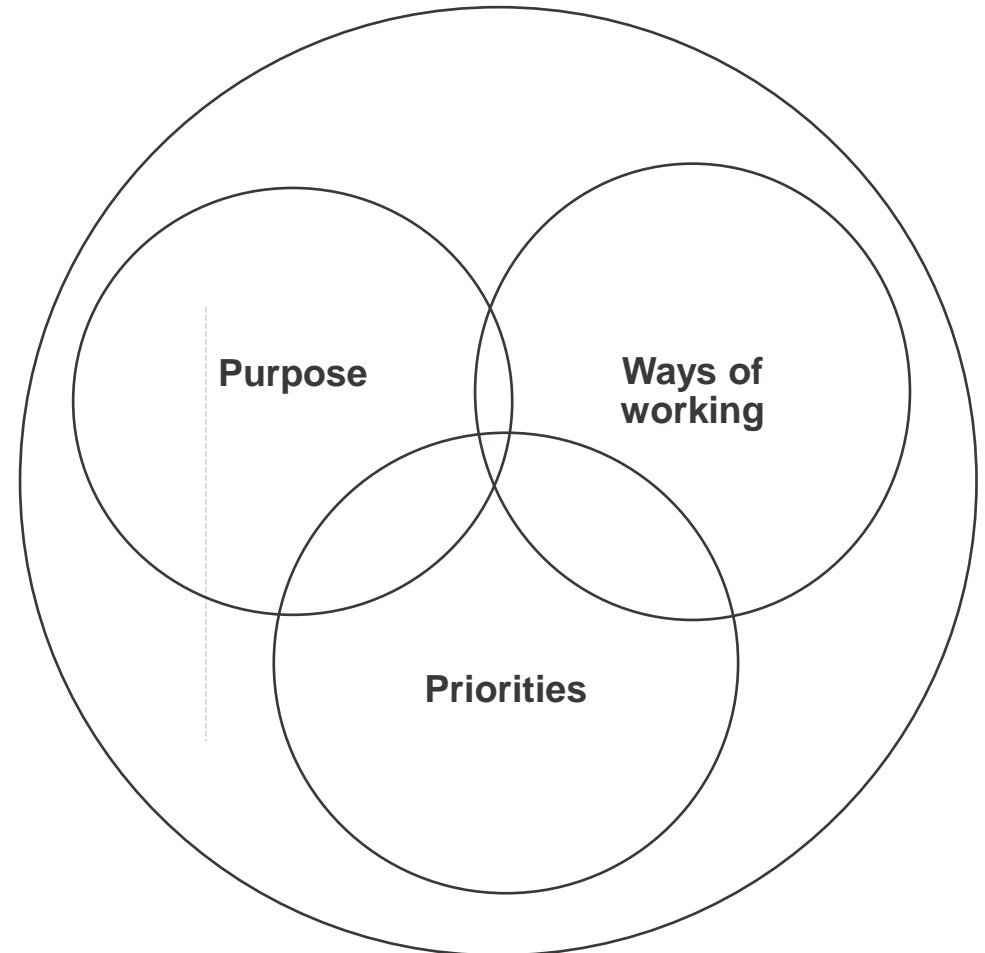
Be purposeful in your design



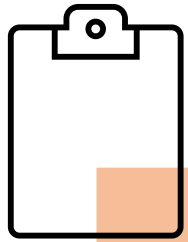
Consider what conditions and behaviours need to be fostered in the set-up process to sustain a CoP:



Build from the bottom up



Be creative with different tools and techniques



Use polls to:

- Enable and model participation
- Enable open and honest contributions
- Surface diversity of thoughts and ideas
- Build consensus
- Nudge thoughts and ideas into new areas
- Build the story



Use story-telling to:

- Build and foster a collective identity
- Align and 'live' values
- Create a compelling case for 'Why'
- Enable participation and ownership
- Celebrate community impact



Case study: University College London



Set up process

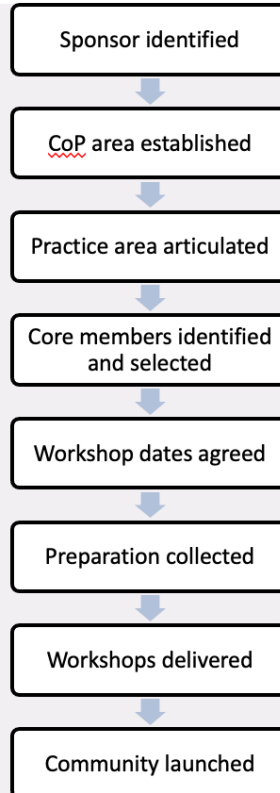


Agreement

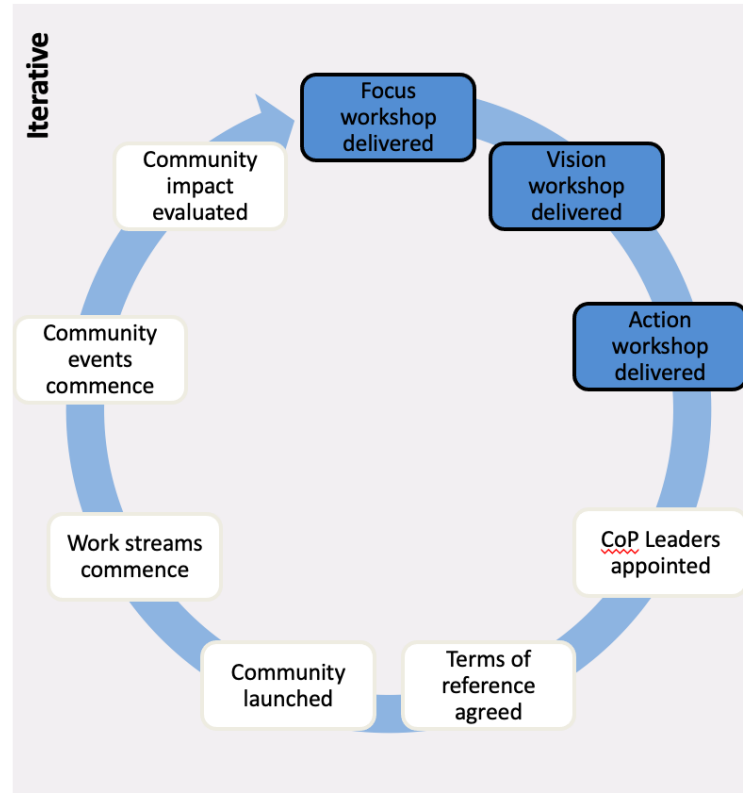
Contracting

Delivery

Set up



Iterative



Case study: University of Glasgow



Set up workshop objectives

Workshop 1

- To bring colleagues who identified interest in setting up a CoP together and begin to build relationships
- To introduce the UofG CoP framework and characteristics
- To identify contributing factors and build consensus on the purpose of the community/vision



Workshop 2

- To continue to build relationships within the CoP
- To identify a range of actions possible to be taken forward and build consensus on priorities
- To identify key roles and ways of working to facilitate CoP and deliver priorities
- To identify selection process



Workshop 3

- To continue to build relationships within the CoP
- To introduce Co-Leads
- To share emerging ideas and seek feedback from Sponsor
- To identify next steps including approach/timeline to Launch



Case study: Bournemouth University



Facilitating successful workshops using the 8 P's

Know what you want to achieve from the workshop.
Identify any specific outcomes.
Consider how long the workshop will need to be to meet the required aims.

Purpose

Identify who to invite
Always introduce the session and participants.
Consider how the attendees are likely to interact with each other.

People

Select an appropriate way of presenting information to participants.
Consider the best way to order topics and activities to keep the participants engaged.

Presentation

Set up the room to encourage discussion.
Clarify expected behaviours for the workshop.
Confirm that notes will be circulated to all participants.
Start with an icebreaker.
Plan a range of activities.
Invite questions.

Participation

Location – home or away?
Choose the right room/ space for activities.
Plan what kit you will need.
Organise catering.
Facilities, e.g. parking for external visitors, access for wheelchair users etc.

Place

Communicate the purpose/aims of the session.
Consider days/times/busy periods.
Create a schedule for the workshop with the more important topics earlier in the workshop in case things over-run.

Preparation

Start with the end in mind. End with the start in mind.
Be flexible with timings.
Be prepared to adjust your plans if needed.
End with a summary of what has been covered.

Process



Mobilise into action

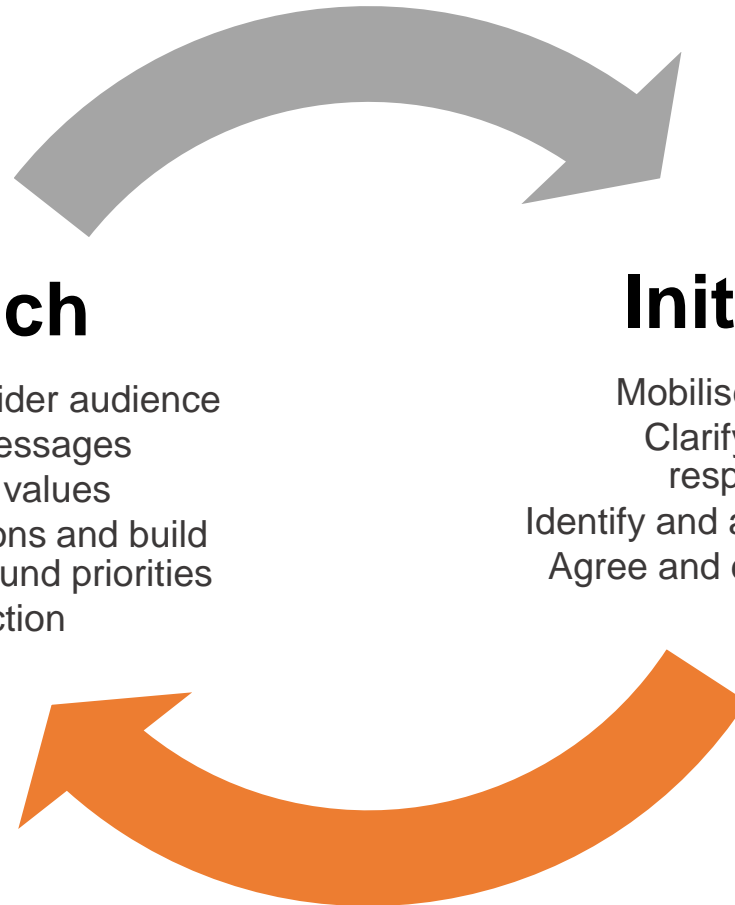


Launch

Promote CoP to wider audience
Share key messages
Role model values
Enable contributions and build engagement around priorities
Call to action

Initiation

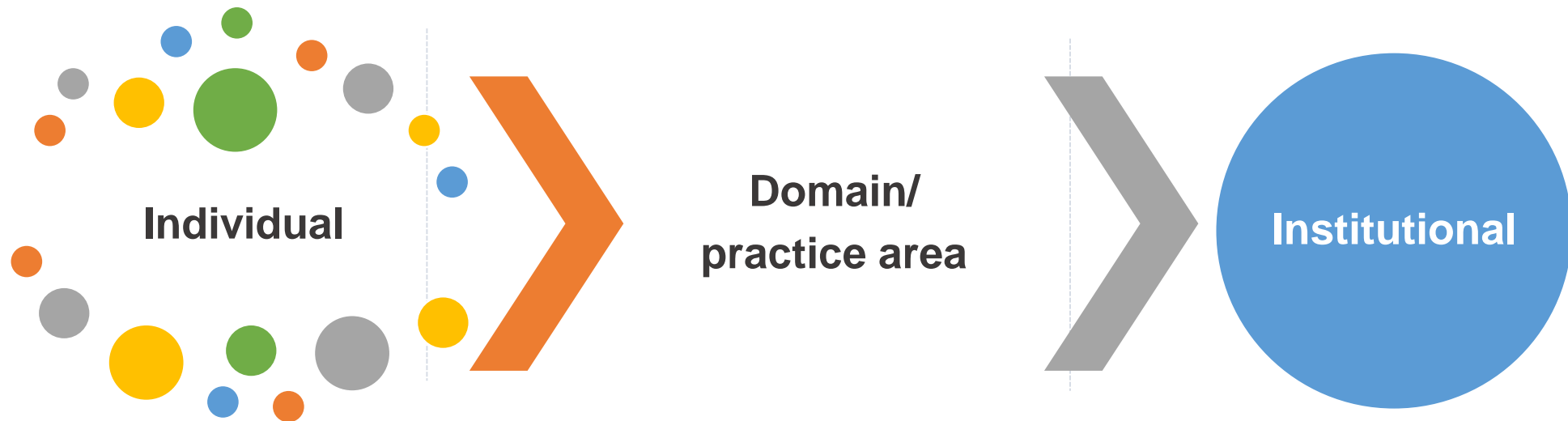
Mobilise core group
Clarify roles and responsibilities
Identify and agree deliverables
Agree and diarise check-ins



Align objectives where possible



Where appropriate, link individual objectives to the CoP domain/practice area and overall institutional priorities



Establish mechanisms to understand value creation



What have you gained?

- Connections
- Skills
- Knowledge
- Practice
- Application
- Confidence
- Change

How have you participated?

- Frequency
- Mode (e.g. discussions, meetings, learning events, projects)

What insight can you share?

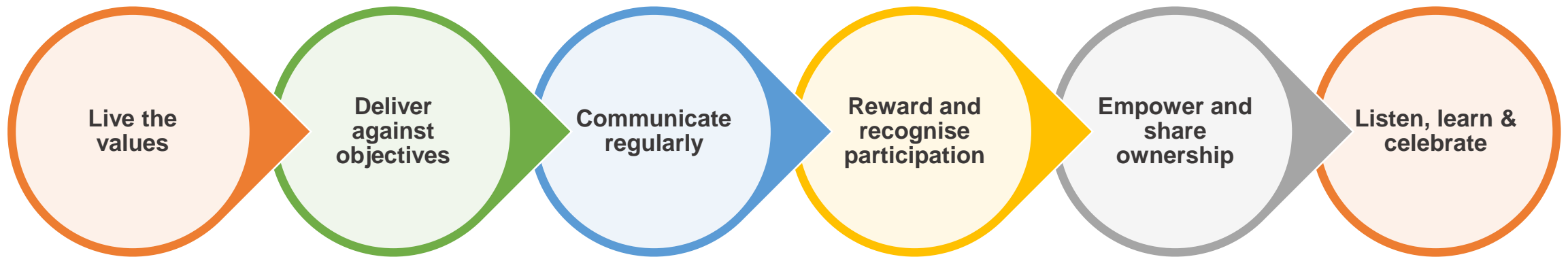
- Experiences of or barriers to participation
- Ideas & opportunities

About you

- Job family
- Grade
- Organisational area
- Protected characteristics



Enabling a Community of Practice



Review & Renew activities



Value creation

- Member Surveys
- Sponsor feedback
- Participation
 - Learning events
 - Projects
 - Teams

Celebrate

- Create showcase
- Communicate value creation
- Celebration event

Adapt & innovate

- Retrospective
 - What went well?
 - What was a challenge?
 - What lessons did we learn?
 - What will we do differently next time?

Renew

- Utilise the set up process



Our story to your story: Bournemouth University



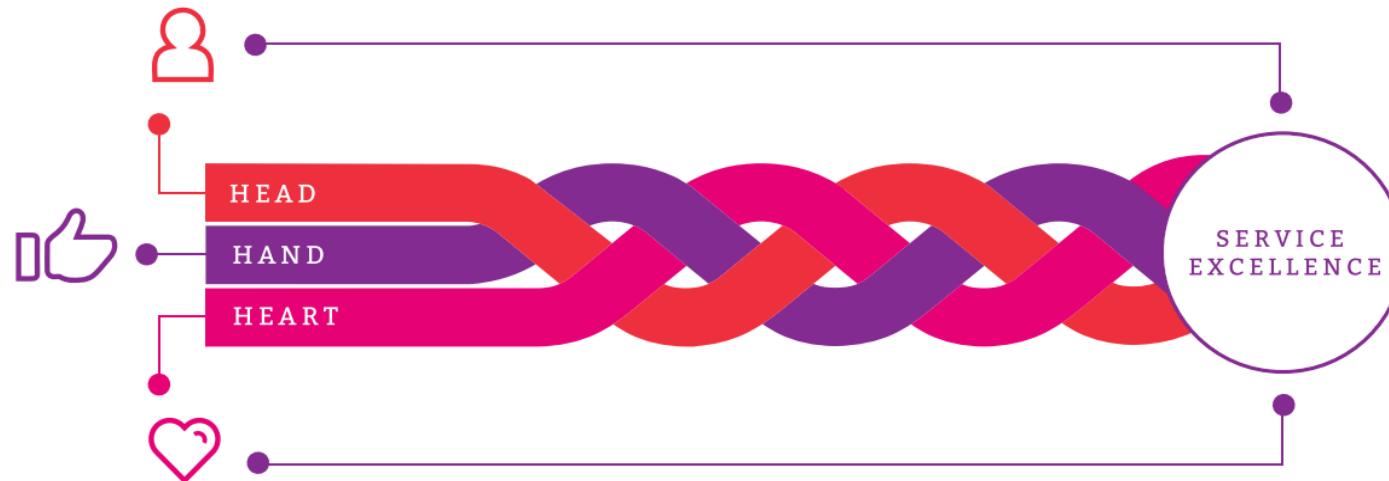
Embracing humanisation through Communities of Practice

Formal organisational committees and meetings allow us to focus on performance and task, our CoP ethos focuses on the:

- Head - our knowledge and sharing with others
- Hand - how we do things and sharing best practice

And importantly

- Heart - embedding kindness, care and a positive mindset by focusing on our sense of purpose



Our story to your story: University of Glasgow



Our Community of Practice Headlines

	Energy survey responses	Set up workshop participants	Community launch participants	Teams members (as of 08/21)	Activities (learning & projects)	Value created @ 6mths (Spring 21)
Leadership & Management (Launched 11/20)	48	13	48	173	Leadership conversations, Seminar series, Monthly themed discussions, Action learning sets & Mentoring	100% acquired new knowledge and connections
Project Management (Launched 11/20)	38	13	52	96	Ad hoc Seminars & Monthly Themed Practice Workshops	100% acquired new knowledge
Sustainability in Learning & Teaching (Launched 05/21)	28	15	40	63	Development of MOOC, Strategic alignment, Monthly coffee chats & Bi-Monthly Practice Workshops,	[Not applicable]



Our story to your story: University College London



UCL Communities of Practice win UHR Award 2019



For the best organisational development and culture change initiative in the sector

**20 CoPs set-up
2500 core and wider members
120 best-practice events delivered
80 practice improvements projects**

- Full integration in the whole employee lifecycle
- From recruitment to inductions and appraisals
- Links with professional development objectives, career pathways and talent retention
- Bridged academic and professional services



Articles (Embedded links)



Communities of Practice

Roles & Responsibilities

Fred Nickols

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Article

Critical corridor talk: Just gossip or stoic resistance? Unrecognised informal Higher Education leadership

August 2018 · Higher Education Quarterly 72(2)

DOI: [10.1111/hequ.12174](https://doi.org/10.1111/hequ.12174)

Project: [Trust and Leadership](#)

 Jill Jameson

Moving stories: exploring the LIFE session storytelling method as a way of enhancing innovative, generative outcomes in practice

Edel Roddy, Tamsin MacBride, Annette Coburn, Anna Jack-Waugh* and Belinda Dewar

*Corresponding author: University of the West of Scotland, Dumfries, Scotland

Email: anna.jack-waugh@uws.ac.uk

Submitted for publication: 5th November 2020

Accepted for publication: 12th February 2021

Published: 19th May 2021

<https://doi.org/10.19043/ijpdj.111.006>

White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack

by Peggy McIntosh

*"I was taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness,
not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group"*

DAILY EFFECTS OF WHITE PRIVILEGE

Encouraging Interdisciplinary Collaboration: A Study of Enablers and Inhibitors Across Silos in Higher Education

Laura Roper

Bournemouth University

 PDF

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24926/ijps.v8i1.3687>

PUBLISHED

2021-04-27

keywords: Interdisciplinary, Collaboration, Silos, Higher Education

"I Am Because We Are": Exploring Women's Leadership Under Ubuntu Worldview

Faith Wambura Ngunjiri

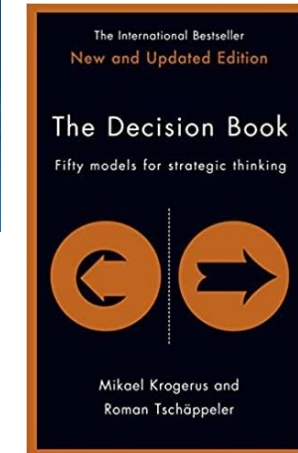
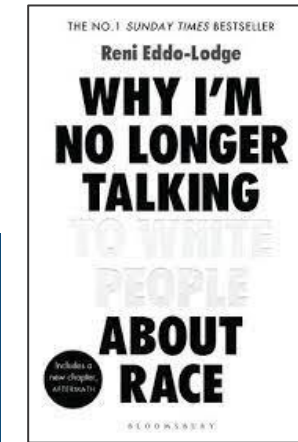
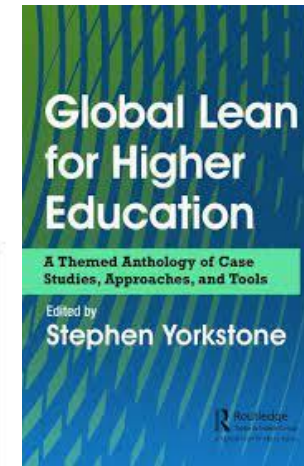
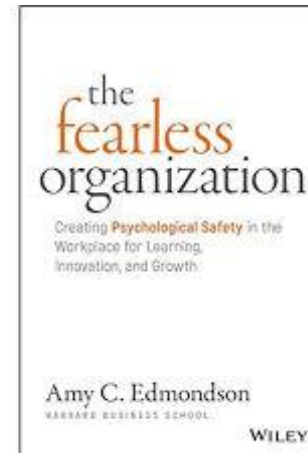
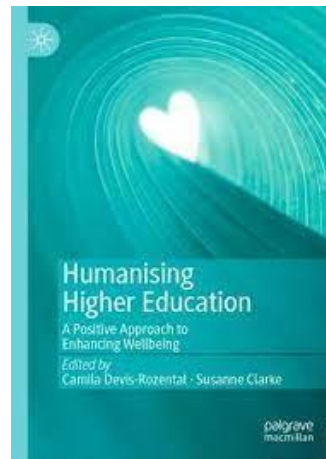
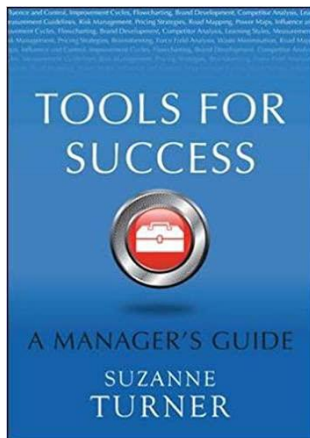
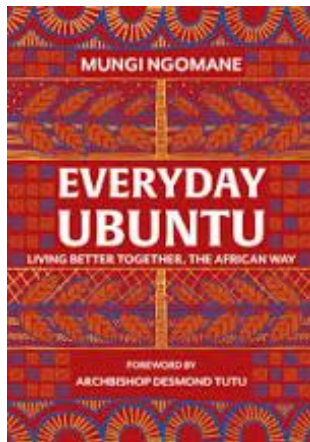
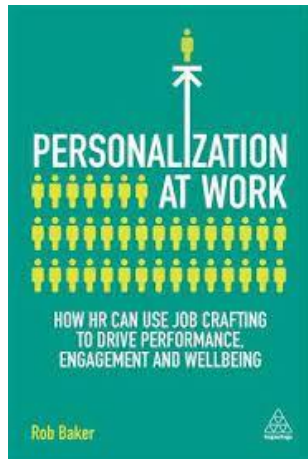
First Published April 11, 2016 | Research Article |  Check for updates

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422316641416>

[Article information](#) ▾



Books (Embedded links)



Guidance (Embedded links)



Seeds for Change
In-depth guide



Facilitation tools for meetings and workshops

A compilation of tools and techniques for working in groups and facilitating meetings or workshops

Rapport 18

Promoting and assessing value creation in communities and networks: a conceptual framework

Etienne Wenger
Beverly Trayner
Maarten de Laat

Ruud de Moor Centrum

Open Universiteit
rdmc.ou.nl



The Why, What and How of Vertical Leadership Development

Heather Monro
May 2021

 Brightspace
www.brightspacelearning.co.uk

A place to shine

Collaboration & Survey tools (Embedded links)



Otter Voice Notes



Jamboard



Polling

in Zoom Meetings



Google Forms

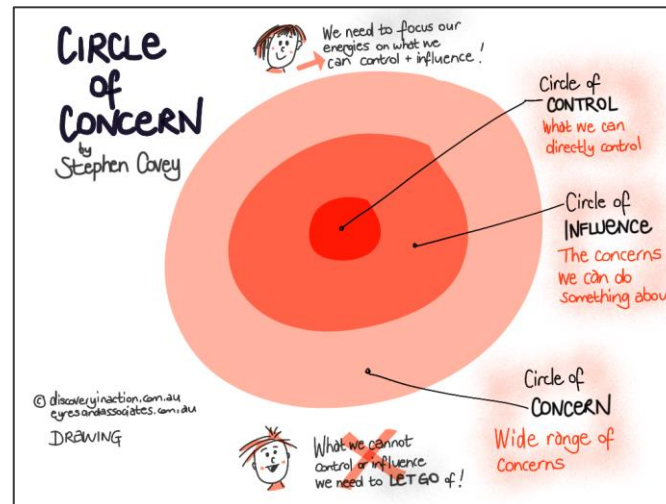
Prioritisation, scope and action



Get started with THE POMODORO TECHNIQUE

- 1 Identify your tasks for the day
- 2 Set a timer for 25 minutes
- 3 Work for the duration of the timer
- 4 Take a five minute break

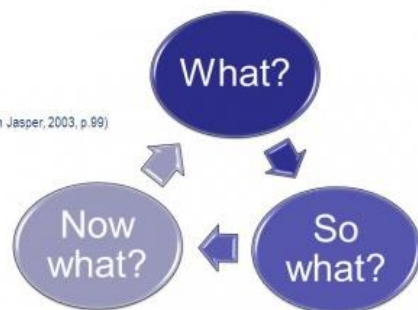
★ After every fourth break, take a longer break of 15-30 minutes



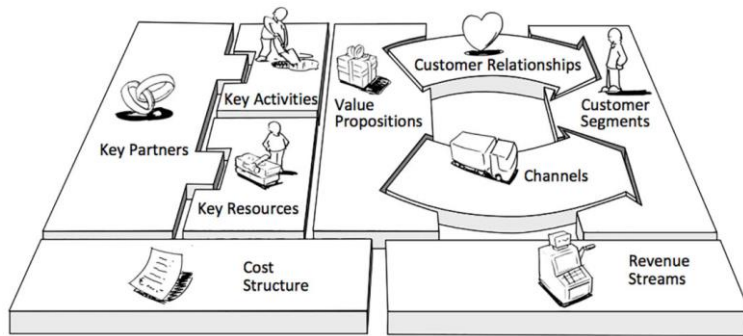
THE EISENHOWER MATRIX

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	<p>Do.</p> <p>Write my book.</p>	<p>Schedule.</p> <p>Workout weekly. Meditate daily. Launch new services. Network with community. Spend time with family.</p>
NOT IMPORTANT	<p>Delegate.</p> <p>Social media sharing. Scheduling meetings and appointments. Editing my posts.</p>	<p>Ignore.</p> <p>Read about sports. Binge watch Netflix. Check my phone constantly.</p>

Borton's (1970) cue questions:



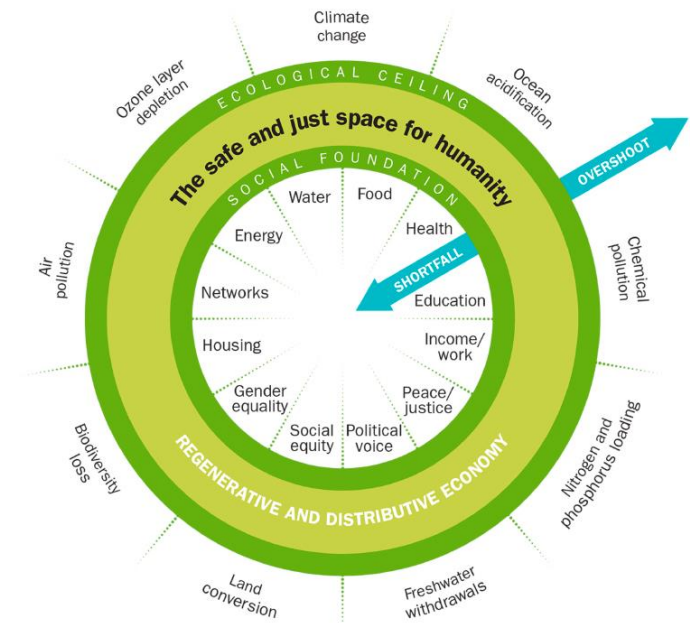
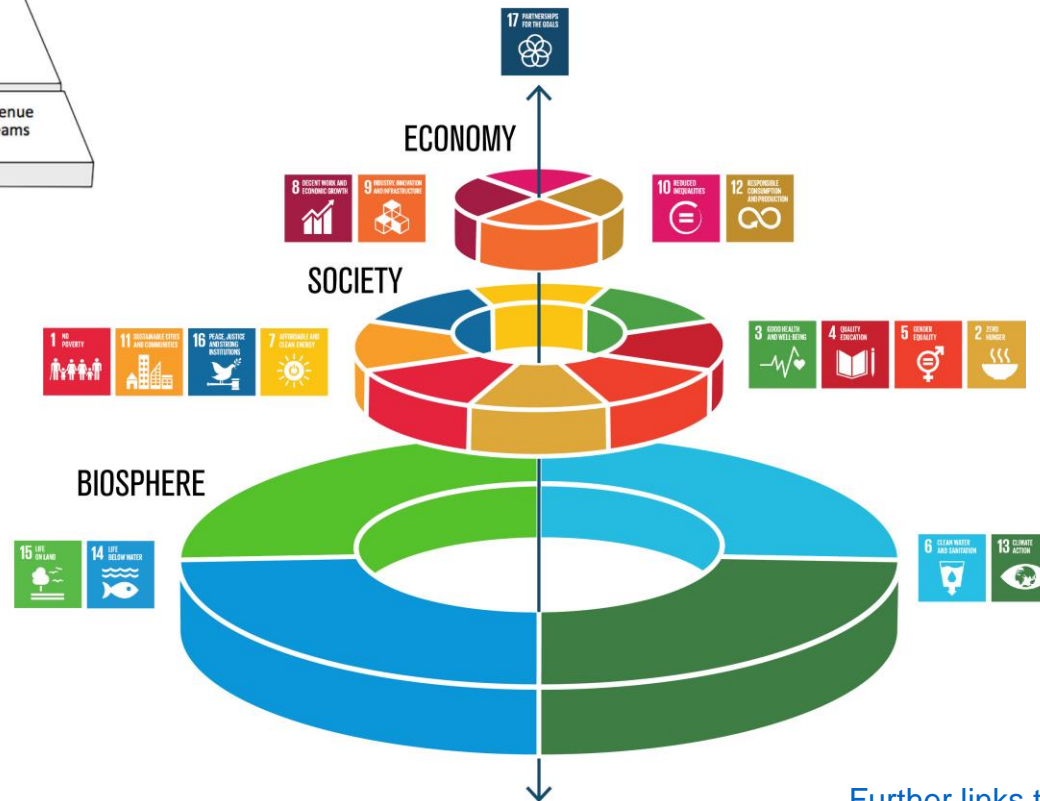
Sustainability & alignment



Adapted from "Business Model Generation", Alexander Osterwalder, Wiley 2012.
www.businessmodelgeneration.com
Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License.

Business model canvas

UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)



Doughnut economics

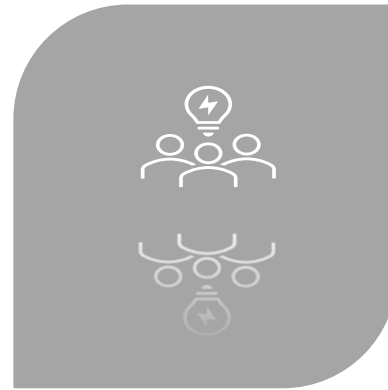
[Further links to resources on regenerative economics and business](#)

Join us: Communities of Practice in HE

(Embedded links)



[Communities of Practice in HE](#)



[Bimonthly practice workshop](#)



[Virtual collaboration](#)

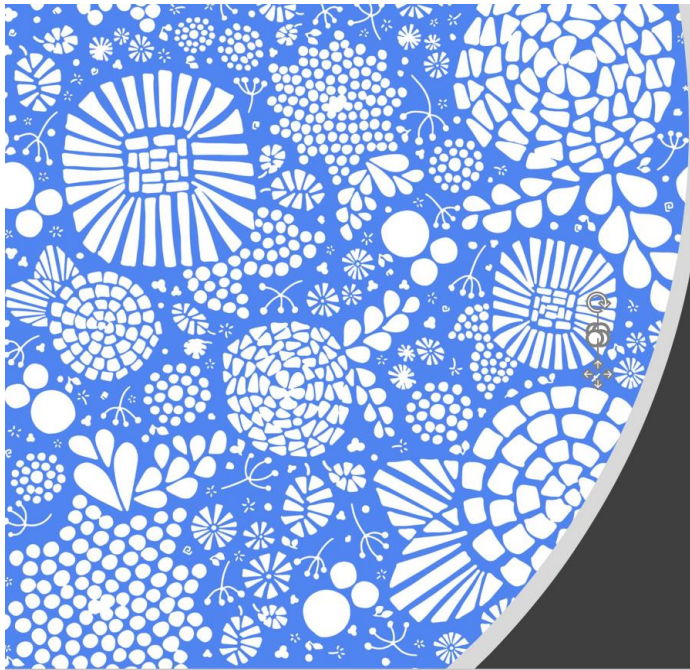
Inspiration



It is always good
to start with an
activity

Create a safe
space to share
Chatham House
Rules!

Inspiration



Plan, but be ready to change in a heartbeat



We learn better when we are having fun!

Inspiration



Nevertheless, she persisted

With thanks to:



ODHE Network for funding this project.

Members of Communities of Practice in Higher Education, for their commitment to and generosity in sharing knowledge, experiences, practice and support.

Final note.

We would kindly ask you to reference the authors if you repurpose or share any of these slides as follows:

Communities of Practice in Higher Education on behalf of ODHE Network [Bultoc, D., Clarke, S., Devis-Rozental, C., Hubbard S., Roper, L., & Sinha, T. 2021]